Name\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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Critics of the Great Depression

Primary Source Worksheet

*Directions: Read the short excerpts and then answer the questions underneath. You may work with a partner on this activity. Make sure that your writ e your answers down on the sheet.*

“To share our wealth by providing for every deserving family to have one third of the average wealth would mean that, at the worst, such a family could have a fairly comfortable home, an automobile, and a radio, with other reasonable home conveniences, and a place to educate their children. Through sharing the work, that is, by limiting the hours of toil so that all would share in what is made and produced in the land, every family would have enough coming in every year to feed, clothe, and provide a fair share of the luxuries of life to its members. Such is the result to a family, at the worst.” (Huey Long, Senate Speech)

1. How much wealth does every family deserve?
2. Why should we share wealth?
3. Why is this in opposition to FDR’s New Deal?
4. What is he criticizing about the New Deal?

Every crumb you eat, every stitch of clothing you wear, every menial purchase which you make is weighted down with an unseen tax as you work and slave for the debt merchants of America. But the $55 billion of debt bonds, held mostly by the debt merchants and the well-circumstanced of this country, have been ably safeguarded from taxation by this peerless leader (Roosevelt) who sham-battles his way along the avenue of popularity with his smile for the poor and his blindness for their plight. Is that driving the money changers from the temple? (Father Coughlin, Address in Minnesota)

1. What is weighing down the purchases Americans make?
2. Why is this a bad thing for Americans?
3. What is Coughlin’s opinion of Roosevelt?
4. What is he criticizing about Roosevelt and the New Deal?

"It is estimated that the population of the age of 60 and above in the United States is somewhere between nine and twelve millions. I suggest that the national government retire all who reach that age on a monthly pension of $200 a month or more, on condition that they spend the money as they get it. This will insure an even distribution throughout the nation of two or three billions of fresh money each month. Thereby assuring a healthy and brisk state of business, comparable to that we enjoyed during war times.

"Our attitude toward Government is wrong. But the fact is, we must learn to expect and demand that the central Government assume the duty of regulating business activity. When business begins to slow down and capital shows signs of timidity, stimulus must be provided by the National Government in the form of additional capital. When times are good and begin to show signs of a speculative debauch such as we saw in 1929, the brakes must be applied through a reduction of the circulation medium. This function of the Government could be easily established and maintained through the pension system for the aged." (Dr. Francis Townsend, letter to editor)

1. What does Townsend call for?
2. Why is he considered an opponent of the New Deal?
3. Does he share some similarities with Roosevelt’s ideas about government? Why or Why not?